



## SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER COX

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### H.R. 3266 – The Faster and Smarter Funding For First Responders Act

- ❖ **Faster, streamlined terrorism preparedness grant-assistance to first responders.**
- ❖ **Priority assistance to first responders serving where the risk is greatest.**
- ❖ **Specific, flexible, and measurable goals for state and local government terrorism preparedness.**
- ❖ **Regional terrorism preparedness grants.**



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- ✓ Homeland Security grants enhance the ability of our first responders to prevent, prepare for, and respond to acts of terrorism.
  - ✓ Since 2001, more than \$23 billion have been made available to state and local governments and first responders to enhance their ability to prevent, prepare for, and respond to acts of terrorism. For FY05, the President has requested another \$5.5 billion from Congress to fund these grants.
  - ✓ While these grants have been well-funded by Congress and the President, they have been slow to improve homeland security because they are not risk-based, do not fund measurable goals, lack adequate planning and face numerous administrative obstacles.
  - ✓ Due to these problems, between \$8 billion and \$9 billion of first responder funding still remains in the pipeline. This funding bottleneck clearly indicates that first responder funding is not reaching the men and women on the front lines fast enough.
  - ✓ The Committee bill will help correct these problems. It will take the politics out of the funding formulas – making the system smarter so that first responders most at risk get help faster.
  - ✓ H.R. 3266 will help first responders and taxpayers get more from every Homeland Security dollar by:
    - prioritizing assistance to first responders serving where the risk is greatest
    - determining the essential capabilities communities need to prepare for terrorism
    - encouraging regional cooperation and mutual aid agreements through regional applications
    - emphasizing an advance planning process to reduce administrative bottlenecks.
  - ✓ In turn, the Committee bill will help federal, state, and local entities to create better, stronger Homeland Security programs.
  - ✓ This bill only covers terrorism preparedness grants, such as DHS' State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative. This bill expressly excludes from coverage all non-DHS federal grants, as well as funding for traditional missions of first responders, such as DHS' Firefighter Assistance grants and its Emergency Management Planning grants.
  - ✓ **H.R. 3266 passed the Committee on Homeland Security by a vote of 37-0 on 3/18/04.**

❖ *Faster, streamlined terrorism preparedness grant-assistance to first responders.*

**ISSUE:**

- After the Department of Homeland Security awards grants to each state, a variety of bureaucratic delays slow the flow of funding to first responders.
- Because of these delays, only 10% of the grants for terrorism preparedness that were distributed in 2003 have actually been spent.

**RESPONSE:**

- Many of the bureaucratic delays in funding are foreseeable and could be avoided by prioritizing the planning process.
- H.R. 3266 moves the planning process for using the grants upfront. It forces grant recipients to decide how to use the money BEFORE they actually receive it.
- For instance, H.R. 3266 requires applicants to submit a State Homeland Security Strategic Plan at the beginning of the application process.
- Among other elements, the Strategic Plan must describe the current preparedness of the state and how the state intends to achieve defined preparedness goals, with an emphasis on regional cooperation.
- The application for grants must be linked to the Strategic Plan and specify how the money will be spent.
- H.R. 3266 also ensures that states award grant money to locals in a timely and efficient manner, by establishing stringent timelines and incentives for grant disbursement, along with penalties for failures to do so.
- Congress, the President, and DHS have ensured that the money is there for first responders.
- But still, we can do better. There is no reason that over \$1.8 billion of 2003 grant money (over 90%) remains unspent, while the need is so great. By creating a more streamlined grant assistance program, the Committee bill will help first responders get the resources that they need.

❖ *Priority assistance to first responders serving where the risk is greatest.*

**ISSUE:**

- Currently, a large percentage of DHS first responder grants are distributed to states based on an arbitrary political formula established in the USA Patriot Act.
- This formula gives each state, regardless of risk or need, .75 percent of the \$2.2 billion available under the State Homeland Security/Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention programs for FY04, with the remaining funds given out based solely on population. This means that almost 40% of this funding pool is tied up in minimum payments to each of the 50 states.
- Under this formula, for example, Wyoming received almost \$38 in first responder grants per person in FY04. California, a state with 70 times the population of Wyoming – a state that was the target of a failed millennium terrorist plot – received just over \$5 per person (See attached chart).
- These state minimums ensure that disproportionate allocations go to areas where risk is low and that neither requested nor need the funds. For example,
  - \$44,000 of Yadkin County, North Carolina's Homeland Security award went to the purchase of a new state-of-the-art mobile decontamination trailer complete with warm showers. Yadkin County's emergency-services director said "we're trying to get equipment that we could use for events that could happen at any time," he said. "I'm not preparing for Osama because I'm not sure he's coming to Yadkin County."
  - \$30,000 in Homeland Security dollars helped fund a defibrillator for a high school in Lake County, Tennessee. Lake County mayor Macie Roberson thought it would be good to have on hand for the district basketball tournament.

**RESPONSE:**

- Terrorists are not arbitrary in selecting their targets, and we cannot be arbitrary in protecting our Nation.
- First responders in higher-risk areas need more money for equipment and training, and need it first.
- H.R. 3266 will create a First Responder Grant Board, responsible for evaluating and prioritizing grant applications based on the threat, vulnerability, and consequences of a terrorist attack to persons and critical infrastructure sectors.
- The new, post-9/11 reality has shown us that terrorists are targeting high-profile, high-impact targets within our borders. This new reality demands a new and smarter approach to first responder funding.
- At the same time, we cannot leave glaring weaknesses elsewhere in the country. That is why H.R. 3266 also requires the Grant Board to seek to achieve and enhance essential capabilities throughout the Nation.

❖ *Specific, flexible, and measurable goals for state and local government terrorism preparedness.*

**ISSUE:**

- Right now, there is no clear or consistent way for states and localities to determine their terrorism preparedness needs or what their preparedness goals should be.
- How can we expect states and localities to be prepared, and to use grant funds effectively, if there is no clear, concise definition of what preparedness means for different types of communities?
- For example, if you live in a medium-sized city in the Midwest, with a row of chemical plants to the North, and a nuclear facility nearby, what are your planning, equipment, training, and exercise needs?

**RESPONSE:**

- Clear preparedness goals help the federal government and states and locals know where to spend the money and to measure results. Funding can be prioritized to fulfill specific gaps in preparedness levels and reduce our greatest vulnerabilities.
- To accomplish this, H.R. 3266 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish specific, flexible, and measurable “essential capabilities” for state and local government terrorism preparedness.
- In establishing these essential capabilities, the Secretary must consider threat, vulnerability, and consequences with respect to the Nation’s population and critical infrastructure sectors, based upon the most current DHS risk assessment.
- To assist the Secretary in defining essential capabilities, H.R. 3266 establishes an advisory Task Force, composed of a broad array of first responders with a diversity of expertise.
- Clearer goals help states and localities focus their efforts and avoid wasteful spending, improving our Nation’s preparedness in specific and measurable ways.

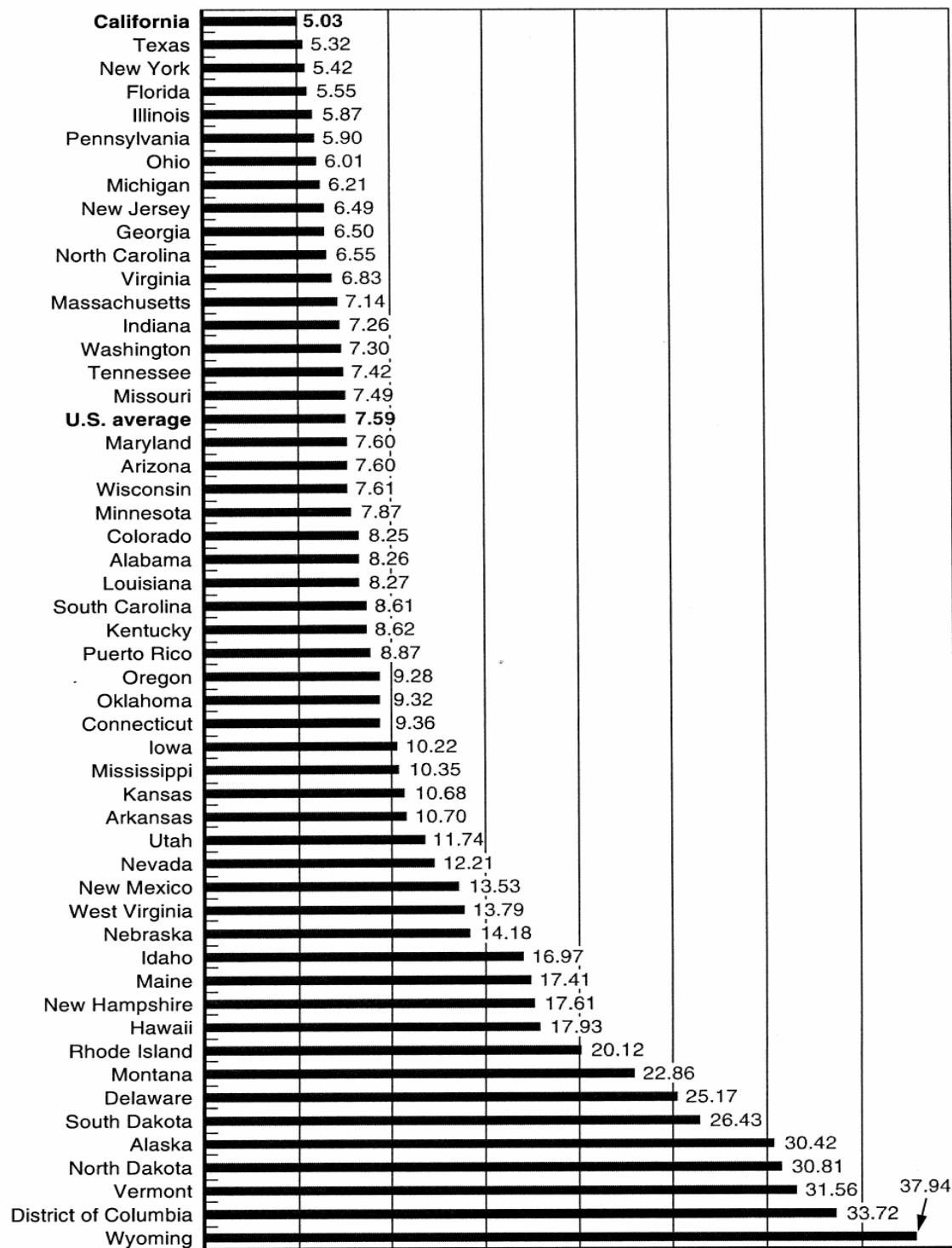
## ❖ *Regional terrorism preparedness grants.*

### **ISSUE:**

- Currently, there is no grant program that allows inter-state or intra-state regions to work together to address their shared needs and prepare for terrorist events by applying directly for DHS grants.
- For example, if a dirty bomb were detonated in Washington, D.C., the effects could be far-reaching – into Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. Yet, under current programs, this region would file four separate plans and four separate applications, with no mechanism to ensure coordination, gain the benefits of mutual aid agreements, or avoid costly and unnecessary redundancies.
- Terrorism does not recognize state boundaries, so to be effective, regions have to plan and prepare together.

### **RESPONSE:**

- Under H.R. 3266, both states and regions may apply for terrorism preparedness grants.
- While states will continue to play a central role in coordinating the distribution of grant funds to first responders at the local level, the Committee bill also ensures that the unique needs of regions can be addressed by the Secretary through direct grants.
- These regional grant requests must be consistent with the applicable State Homeland Security Strategic Plan. states also have the opportunity to comment on the consistency of the regional proposal with their state plan.
- Smarter, faster funding requires thinking outside the box and outside artificial jurisdictional boundaries.



Fiscal year 2004 dollars per capita, by state

**Figure 3—ODP State and Local Grants for First Responders, Law Enforcement Terrorism Preparedness Program Grants, and Citizen Corps Grants, per Capita Allocation, by State, 2004**

Source -- Public Policy Institute of California